

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00281 020824Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 ACDA-12 PM-05 /061 W
-----086081 020828Z /11

P R 020730Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9065
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC PRIORITY

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0281

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL MASS LA UR TH VM
SUBJECT: MIG-21'S IN LAOS REPORTED TO BE GROUNDED

REF: VIENTIANE 0258

1. ACCORDING TO A KNOWLEDGABLE AND RELIABLE LAO SOURCE, THE FEBRUARY 21 MIG-21 CRASH (REFTEL) WAS THE RESULT OF A TECHNICAL FAILURE. A SOVIET MAJOR OR COLONEL FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR WAS THE PILOT.

2. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THE MIG-21'S NOW STATIONED IN LAOS ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY IN PULLING OUT OF DIVES; SPECIFICALLY, THE MIG-21'S TEND TO STALL AS THEY PULL OUT OF THE DIVE. AS A RESULT OF THIS PROBLEM, ALL MIG-21'S IN LAOS HAVE BEEN GROUNDED. (COMMENT: DURING RECENT MONTHS, MIG-21'S MADE ALMOST DAILY PASSES OVER VIENTIANE. NO MIG'S HAVE APPEARED OVER VIENTIANE FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK.)

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3. OUR SOURCE SAID THAT ALL MIG'S IN LAOS ARE BASED IN VIENTIANE.

4. THE SOURCE ALSO SAID THAT THE MIG-21'S WERE BROUGHT TO DA NANG FROM THE SOVIET UNION DISASSEMBLED AND WERE REASSEMBLED IN DA NANG BEFORE BEING FLOWN TO LAOS IN

SEPTEMBER 1977.

5. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THE SOVIETS WILL BE SENDING AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF ANTONOV 2 AIRCRAFT TO LAOS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. THE SOURCE SAID THAT LPDR AIRCRAFT REGULARLY TRANSPORT THAI COMMUNIST SOLDIERS TO LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT LAOS. THE CPT SOLDIERS ARE SUPPOSEDLY RECOGNIZABLE BY THEIR UNIFORMS, WHICH ARE OF A DIFFERENT SHADE OF GREEN FROM LPLA UNIFORMS.

7. COMMENT: SOURCE'S REPORT OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH MIG'S CORRESPONDS WITH DESCRIPTION OF CRASH BY EYEWITNESS, REFTEL: "...IT HAD JUST BEGUN A SUDDEN STEEP CLIMB, THERE HAD BEEN AN EXPLOSION (ALSO DESCRIBED AS A "POP") AND THE PLANE CRASHED." THIS DESCRIPTION PLUS THE ABSENCE OF MIG'S OVER VIENTIANE IN RECENT DAYS LENDS CREDENCE TO THIS SOURCE'S REPORT.
ROBERTS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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